

Foundational Quality Standards for Early Learning Programs Covered in this Learning Session: *Outdoor Play – Fun and Safe!*

WAC 110-300-0145 Outdoor early learning program space.

- (1) An early learning provider must visually inspect outdoor program space and equipment daily to ensure outdoor areas and equipment are free of hazards.
- (2) Outdoor play space must contain a minimum of seventy-five square feet of licensed usable space per child accessing the play space at any given time. An early learning provider may develop an alternate plan if an early learning program does not have enough outdoor play space to accommodate all enrolled children at once (for example, rotating groups of children to play outdoors or using an off-site play area). The department must approve alternate plans to use off-site play spaces.
- (3) An early learning program must have shaded areas in outdoor play space provided by trees, buildings, or shade structures.
- (4) Outdoor play space must promote a variety of age and developmentally appropriate active play areas for children in care. Activities must encourage and promote both moderate and vigorous physical activity such as running, jumping, skipping, throwing, pedaling, pushing, pulling, kicking, and climbing.
- (5) When the licensed outdoor play space is not immediately adjacent to the early learning program site, an early learning provider must use a safe route when moving to and from the licensed outdoor play space.
- (6) Licensed outdoor play areas must be enclosed with a fence or barrier that is intended to prevent children from exiting and discourages climbing. If the outdoor play area is enclosed by a barrier that is not a fence, the barrier may be a wall constructed with brick, stone, or a similar material.
- (7) Licensed outdoor play areas must be enclosed to deter people without permission from entering the area.
- (8) Fences, barriers, and gates must be in good condition, have no gap through which a sphere with a diameter of three and one-half inches can pass, and have a minimum height of forty-eight inches or conform in height to applicable local codes.
- (9) The opening between a fence post and gate or fence post and building must have no gap through which a sphere with a diameter of three and one-half inches can pass.
- (10) An early learning provider must not install any wooden fence, playground structure, or furniture if it contains chromated copper arsenate (CCA), creosote or pentachlorophenol. If wooden fences, structures, and furniture are suspected of having

CCA, they must be tested. If CCA is present, fences, structures, and furniture must be removed or sealed with an oil-based outdoor sealant annually or as needed within six months of the date this section becomes effective.

(11) Within six months of the date this section becomes effective or prior to licensing, exiting mechanisms on gates from a licensed outdoor play area to unlicensed space must be equipped with a self-closing and self-latching mechanism (shuts automatically when released from an individual's control). A gate that is not an emergency exit must be locked or self-closing and self-latching.

(12) Outdoor play areas must have two exits that must not be partially or entirely blocked, with at least one exit located away from the building.¹

¹ [WSR 18-15-001, recodified as § 110-300-0145, filed 7/5/18, effective 7/5/18. Statutory Authority: RCW [43.215.070](#), [43.215.201](#) and chapter [42.56](#) RCW. WSR 18-14-079, § 170-300-0145, filed 6/30/18, effective 8/1/19.]

WAC 110-300-0146 Equipment and surfaces in outdoor early learning space.

(1) Playground equipment and surfacing used by an early learning provider must comply with applicable CPSC guidelines, as now and hereafter amended including, but not limited to, installing, arranging, designing, constructing, and maintaining outdoor play equipment and surfacing.

(a) Climbing play equipment must not be placed on or above concrete, asphalt, packed soil, lumber, or similar hard surfaces;

(b) The ground under swings and play equipment must be covered by a shock absorbing material (grass alone is not an acceptable) such as:

(i) Pea gravel at least nine inches deep;

(ii) Playground wood chips at least nine inches deep;

(iii) Shredded recycled rubber at least six inches deep; or

(iv) Any material that has a certificate of compliance, label, or documentation stating it meets ASTM standards F1292-13 and F2223-10, as now and hereafter amended.

(2) Permanently anchored outdoor play equipment must not be placed over septic tank areas or drain fields, and must be installed according to the manufacturer's directions.

(3) Handmade playground equipment must be maintained for safety or removed when no longer safe. Prior to construction of new handmade playground equipment, the provider must notify the department and have plans and a materials list available upon request.

(4) Bouncing equipment including, but not limited to, trampolines, rebounders and inflatable equipment must be inaccessible and locked. This requirement does not apply to bounce balls designed to be used by individual children.²

² [WSR 18-15-001, recodified as § 110-300-0146, filed 7/5/18, effective 7/5/18. Statutory Authority: RCW [43.215.070](#), [43.215.201](#) and chapter [42.56](#) RCW. WSR 18-14-079, § 170-300-0146, filed 6/30/18, effective 8/1/19.]